

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

IO-14 SAJ-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EURE-00

DRC-01 /112 W

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O R 211840Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0317

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3575

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PO

SUBJ: RUMORED SPINOLA RESIGNATION

1. A CLOSELY HELD DISPUTE BETWEEN GENERAL SPINOLA AND THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) HAS BEEN UNDERWAY SINCE LATE LAST WEEK. THE ORIGIN OF THE CONFLICT IS A SERIES OF ISSUES INCLUDING DECOLONIZATION, THE AFM "SANEAMENTO" PROGRAM FOR PURGING THE OFFICER CORPS OF "FASCISTS" AND INCOMPETENTS, AND ABOVE ALL THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE AFM TO THE REGULAR MILITARY HEIRARCHY.

2. ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY INCLUDING SOME AFM OFFICERS, ARE SAID TO HAVE PETITIONED FOR AN END TO THE CURRENT AMBIGUOUS SYSTEM WHERE THE NORMAL MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE IS OBSTRUCTED BY THE CAPTAINS AND MAJORS OF THE AFM WHO SHARE AT LEAST EQUAL AND OFTEN OVERRIDING AUTHORITY OVER THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.

3. AS A RESULT OF THESE CONFLICTS A GOOD BIT OF HEAD COUNTING HAS BEEN GOING ON TO DETERMINE WHICH MILITARY UNITS WOULD STAND WITH SPINOLA AND WHICH WOULD STAND
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WITH THE AFM. WE HAVE RECEIVED DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED

REPORTS OF THE RESULTS OF THIS HEAD COUNTING.

4. SPINOLA IS REPORTED TO HAVE OFFERED HIS RESIGNATION LAST WEEK, ON THIS ISSUE, BUT WAS DISSUADED BY GENERAL COSTA GOMES, WHO HAS BEEN SERVING AS MIDDLEMAN AND CONCILIATOR.

5. THE CONFLICT HAS FOCUSSED ON THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE AFM. THE SPINOLA GROUP IS HOPING TO ABOLISH THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE, AN ACT WHICH WOULD LEAVE THE AFM INSTITUTIONALLY HEADLESS AND PRESUMABLY REMOVE THE AFM FROM ITS ROLE IN THE COMMAND STRUCTURE. THIS HOPE SEEMS LIKELY TO PROVE VAIN.

6. ROLE OF COSTA GOMES IN ALL THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT AS COSTA GOMES IS RESPECTED ON ALL SIDES AND HAS UNCANNY ABILITY TO DETECT WHICH WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING AND TRIM HIS SAILS ACCORDINGLY. SHOULD SPINOLA FOLLOW THROUGH ON HIS THREAT TO RESIGN COSTA GOMES WOULD BE THE LIKELY CANDIDATE TO REPLACE HIM. HOWEVER, WE DOUBT THAT SPINOLA WILL CARRY OUT HIS RESIGNATION THREAT. OUR JUDGEMENT IS THAT HE IS USING THE THREAT OF HIS DEPARTURE TO COALESCE SUPPORT BEHIND HIS POSITION, AND OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT HIS CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE BETTER THAN EVEN.

7. COMMENT: WE EXPECT TO HAVE SOME AUTHORITATIVE COMMENT ON THESE EVENTS AFTER CHARGE MEETS SEPARATELY WITH GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO AND MAJOR VITOR ALVES TOMORROW. ALVES IS ONE OF THE THREE KEY AFM COORDINATING COMMITTEE LEADERS.
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